



Working to make North Carolina  
the best place to be and raise a child

## FACT SHEET

### **ACTION FOR CHILDREN NORTH CAROLINA 2007 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

March 2007

#### **Ensure All North Carolina Children Have Health Insurance**

##### **Enact Carolina Cares for Children**

North Carolina has experienced the second largest decline in the U.S. in employer-provided health insurance coverage for employees and their dependents. More than 264,000 North Carolina children lack health insurance—enough to stretch from Greensboro to Wilmington if holding hands. *Carolina Cares for Children* is a plan to make health insurance available to all children in North Carolina by providing a sliding scale premium (the premium increases with family income) to children in working families earning between 200% and 300% of the federal poverty limit (\$42,000 per year) and allowing parents with higher incomes to pay the full premium for insurance for their currently uninsured child.

#### **Enact a State Earned Income Tax Credit**

**HB 6, sponsored by Representative Wainwright, Adams, Coleman, Ross for 5% NC EITC**

**HB 51, sponsored by Representatives Weiss, Insko and Rapp for 10% NC EITC**

**SB7, sponsored by Senator Hoyle for 5% NC EITC**

**SB 955, sponsored by Senator Clodfelter for 10% NC EITC**

More than 85% of children in low-income families live with a working parent. Yet, despite that work effort, too many families struggle to make ends meet. On a federal level, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has been the single most effective government program at lifting children out of poverty. It is time for North Carolina to adopt a state-level EITC to raise more working families above federal poverty level.

#### **Raise the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction from 16 to 18**

**HB 492, sponsored by Representative Bordsen, Bryant, Love and Wainwright**

**SB1078, sponsored by Senator Eleanor Kinnaird**

At age 16, all North Carolina youth accused of any crime, even misdemeanors and non-violent crimes, are tried through the adult criminal system. Minors in the adult system are treated as adults, which means they have a permanent record, they are more likely to receive unsupervised probation, their families are not part of the court proceedings or sentencing and they are less likely to be required to finish high school or receive appropriate treatment and training to help them reform. The data indicate that children remaining in the juvenile system not only have greater access to services, but are more likely to reform; while children placed in the adult system are more likely to learn how to commit further crimes. These bills would implement the N.C. Sentencing and Policy Commission recommendation that North Carolina treat 16- and 17-year-olds as minors in the criminal system, but allow a Judge or District Attorney the right to refer teenage children accused of committing felonies to the adult system on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Enact Child Endangerment Felony**

**SB 82, sponsored by Senator Allran**

Currently it is only a misdemeanor for a parent or other caretaker to place a child in serious jeopardy of injury when no death results. Forty-four other states have child endangerment statutes which deem child endangerment a felony. Based, in part, upon Action for Children's past research regarding children who die of neglect, the N.C. Child Fatality Task Force has recommended that North Carolina adopt a child endangerment statute which makes it a felony to knowingly or with undue negligence place a child in harm's way.

#### **Increase State Appropriations for Child Care Subsidies**

Currently, more than 32,000 children of working parents languish on the waiting list for child care subsidies, which help help parents afford the safe, affordable child care they need to be reliable employees. Additionally, rates paid to providers are so low that many centers and daycare homes are having a hard time keeping their doors open. Action for Children North Carolina will continue to push for increased state appropriations to reduce the child care waiting list and to improve reimbursement rates statewide.